

Q. Was there ever a time when it was going to be off?

The Vice President. No, no. What he meant by that was that it accomplished not only the result of getting the relief but also getting the convoys a little freer access. That's what he meant by——

Q. And has it done that?

The Vice President. Yes, it has.

NOTE: The exchange began at 9:45 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks Announcing the Initiative To Streamline Government

March 3, 1993

Ladies and gentlemen, I think you all know we are here to announce a terribly important initiative in this administration to bring about greater efficiency and lower cost of Government.

I want to begin by saying that we intend for this to be a bipartisan and a citizen Government effort. And I'm delighted by the concerned Members of Congress who are here today with the Vice President and me, people who have already worked on this issue. I'd like to begin just by acknowledging the presence here of Senators Glenn and Levin, Senator Cohen, Senator Dorgan, Senator Lieberman, Senator Roth, and Senator Krueger; and in the House, Congressman Conyers, Congressman Clinger, Congressman Gordon, Congressman Laughlin, and Congresswoman Pryce and Congresswoman Slaughter. All of them have manifested an interest in the issues we are here to discuss today.

I also want to especially thank the distinguished comptroller of the State of Texas, John Sharp, who's to my right here, for the work that he did with us to put this project together and for coming all the way from Texas to be with us and with his Senator.

Today I am taking what I hope and believe will be a historic step in reforming the Federal Government by announcing the formation of a national performance review. Our goal is to make the entire Federal Government both less expensive and more efficient,

and to change the culture of our national bureaucracy away from complacency and entitlement toward initiative and empowerment. We intend to redesign, to reinvent, to reinvigorate the entire National Government.

Working under the direction of the Vice President for the next 6 months, we'll conduct an intensive national review of every single Government agency and service. We'll enlist citizens and Government workers and leaders from the private sector in a search not only for ways to cut wasteful spending but also for ways to improve services to our citizens and to make our Government work better.

I'll ask every member of our Cabinet to assign their best people to this project, managers, auditors, and frontline workers as well. And to put the "M" back in the OMB, I've asked Phil Lader, who is to my far left, the new Deputy Director for Management at OMB and a person who has spent his life solving difficult and challenging management and people problems, to take the lead in making our Government work better, not only during this 6-month period but permanently for as long as I am President.

We will turn first to Federal employees for help. They know better than anyone else how to do their jobs if someone will simply ask them and reward them for wanting to do it better. We'll ask the public to help us improve services and cut waste by calling an 800 number or by writing to the Vice President, because no one deserves a bigger say in the services Government provides than Government's customers, the American people. We'll look for ways to streamline our own organizations to reduce unnecessary layers and to improve services to the better uses of technology by giving managers more flexibility and by giving frontline workers more decisionmaking power. Just as we're trying to do that in the White House, we will try to do that throughout the National Government.

When I was the Governor of Arkansas, our State became the first in the Nation to institute a governmentwide total quality management program. And I can tell you, it works. It isn't easy. It isn't quick. It can make a huge

difference, not only to the people but also to the people who work for the Government as well.

We'll look at the good work that has already been done, including many thoughtful reforms proposed by Members of the Congress, including the work last year by the House Task Force on Government Waste, chaired by then Congressman and now Senator Byron Dorgan. They discovered, among other things, that the Pentagon had stockpiled 1.2 million bottles of nasal spray. Even with my allergies, I only need half that many. [Laughter] As we locate such waste and wipe it out, it will be a breath of fresh air to the American taxpayers.

Cutting spending will be a priority. But so is making the system work better for the people who work in Government and the people who pay the bills and are served by it. The truth is we can't achieve the savings we want simply by cutting funds. We must also use the remaining funds in a much wiser way. We'll challenge the basic assumptions of every program, asking does it work; does it provide quality service; does it encourage innovation and reward hard work? If the answer is no or if there's a better way to do it or if there's something that the Federal Government is doing it should simply stop doing, we'll try to make the changes needed.

Many good programs began for a good reason: to serve a national purpose or to give the States time to develop an institutional capacity to administer them. But times change, and in many cases State and local governments are now better suited to handle these programs. The Federal Government simply can't do everything, and there are many things the States or the private sector could do better.

This performance review will not produce another report just to gather dust in some warehouse. We have enough of them already. That's why I am asking for a list of very specific actions we can take now, agency by agency, program by program. This is hard work. We've been a long time getting to this spot, and we can't change the Government overnight. But we can continuously improve our operations in ways that reap dramatic results for the people of this country.

Two years ago, when the State of Texas faced an enormous budget shortfall, they launched a performance review under the leadership of John Sharp that saved the taxpayers billions of dollars over the ensuing years, made government work better at the same time.

Last month, Senator Bob Krueger took out an ad in the Washington Post just inviting the public to call a waste hotline to help make Government work and to help make it 100 percent fat-free. He got 200 calls the first day.

Vice President Gore and I think a national performance review is an absolutely necessary beginning, because we have too much to do that a wasteful and mismanaged Government will not be able to do. We have to cut and invest at the same time, something that's never been done before. We have to reduce the cost of health care and meet the challenges of an intensely competitive global economy. And we have to do those things with less money than we're spending in many areas today. We have to reduce the largest deficit in our history, as we do in our economic program, or it will literally rob us of our ability to solve problems, invest in the future, or thrive economically.

And most important, the American people deserve a Government that is both honest and efficient, and for too long they haven't gotten it. For most Americans, a college loan or a Social Security check represents a common border with the best ideals and goals of our country. We all count to some extent on our Government to protect the environment, to provide education and health care and other basic needs. But democracy can become quickly an empty phrase, if those who are elected to serve cannot meet the needs of the people except with Government that costs too much or is too slow or too arrogant or too unresponsive.

Finally, let me stress that this performance review, as I said at the beginning, is not about politics. Programs passed by both Democratic Presidents and Republican Presidents, voted on by Members of Congress of both parties, and supported by the American people at the time are being undermined by an inefficient and outdated bureaucracy and by our huge debt. For too long the basic func-

tioning of the Government has gone unexamined. We want to make improving the way Government does business a permanent part of how Government works, regardless of which party is in power.

It isn't written anywhere that government can't be thrifty or flexible or entrepreneurial. Increasingly, most government is, and it is time the Federal Government follows the example set by the most innovative State and local leaders and by the many huge private sector companies that have had to go through the same sort of searching reexamination over the last decade, companies that have downsized and streamlined and become more customer friendly and, as a result, have had much, much more success.

In short, it's time our Government adjusted to the real world, tightened its belt, managed its affairs in the context of an economy that is information based, rapidly changing, and puts a premium on speed and function and service, not rules and regulations.

Americans voted for a change last November. They want better schools and health care and better roads and more jobs, but they want us to do it all with a Government that works better on less money and is more responsive. The American people may not know specifically how to do it, although many of them have good particular ideas, but I'm confident our people are willing to try new ways and they want us to experiment. They want us to do things that have worked in other contexts now in the National Government, and that's what we are here to do today.

I thank the Vice President for his willingness to lead this effort. I thank the Members of Congress who are here and those who are not who are supporting us. And I earnestly enlist the support of the American people and especially the employees of the United States Government in this important effort.

I'd like now to introduce the Vice President, who will be in charge of this effort of performance review for the next 6 months, for his statement.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:07 a.m. in Room 450 of the Old Executive Office Building.

Remarks on Receiving the Rotary International Award of Honor and an Exchange With Reporters

March 4, 1993

Award of Honor

Mr. Dochterman. Mr. President, as the former president of Rotary International, I have the occasion on several occasions to present an award called the Rotary International Award of Honor presented to selected heads of state. We've only presented this on about 12 occasions. This award is given for humanitarian service. And the service that you're giving for Rotary International's programs of support for immunization of children in the world, as well as our programs of humanitarian aid in Bosnia and Croatia, gives me the opportunity—if you would accept this award on behalf of 1,100,000 Rotarians of the world in 187 countries—it would be a great pleasure—to accept this award.

The President. Thank you for your good work, and thank you for the award. I appreciate that.

Mr. Dochterman. It has a ribbon there, but I'll not be so presumptuous to put it over your—

The President. Isn't it beautiful? Thank you.

Mr. Dochterman. This award has been presented on selected occasions on behalf of those who support humanitarian efforts throughout the world.

The President. I'm deeply honored.

World Trade Center Bombing

Q. Excuse me, Mr. President, can you tell us anything about the arrest and whether the American people can now believe that they are secure in that someone has been arrested?

The President. I can tell you that I was informed this morning about it. And the authorities are still working on a statement that I think will be issued to you later this afternoon. I think they'll be able to give you some more information later this afternoon.

Q. Now the suspect though is linked to terrorism, should Americans feel less secure about their safety?